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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
Washington 25, D. C.

FACT SHEET

Egg Consumption in 1948

February 1948

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The Situation:

Although there is no present indication that a large surplus of eggs will be produced in 1948, consumers can look forward to an ample supply throughout the year particularly during the heavy production season of February through June.

Prospective laying flock numbers indicate a probable egg production for 1948 sufficient to provide for all normal requirements, including eggs for hatching, for military requirements for commercial exports, and for domestic consumption at the rate of about 380 eggs per capita.

Egg production for 1948 started off with a national laying flock on January 1 of 428,000,000 hens and pullets. This was smaller by 9,000,000 birds, than on the same date a year earlier. With this smaller number of layers on farms, a surplus of eggs as large as in 1947 is not likely. The reduction, however, was not as great as desired from the viewpoint of grain conservation. The culling of laying flocks in January was about normal and on February 1 there were 408,000,000 potential layers on farms or 28,000,000 above the goal of 380,000,000 layers suggested by the Department.

Per Capita Supply Probably 380-385 Eggs:

The prospective supply for domestic consumption of 380 to 385 eggs per capita in 1948 is about the same as was actually used by consumers in 1947. This represents a high level of domestic consumption, but in view of the probable shortage of competing foods, any large surplus of eggs for the year as a whole seems improbable. It is entirely probable, however, that during the season of heaviest production which is now approaching there will be periods in which market supplies may be more than adequate to take care of current demands and storage requirements.

Under such circumstances, the prices producers receive for eggs during the flush production season may drop at times below 90 percent of parity. The U. S. Department of Agriculture is required by law (Steagall Amendment) to maintain the annual average price at this level.

Movement of Eggs into Consumer Channels Needs to be Featured:

To minimize the need for any support program by the Government, every effort should be made to keep the current production of eggs, especially during the flush production season, moving in regular market channels to consumer outlets, or into commercial storage for consumption later on this year.

The immediate need, and one which is expected to be evident throughout the flush production period, is that of maintaining consumption of eggs at a relatively high level. No elaborate promotional efforts are warranted at this time, but the constant featuring of eggs throughout the spring (March, April and May) to keep consumers aware of their seasonal abundance should help considerably to keep trade channels free, and may serve to eliminate the need for an active Government price-support program.

